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ABSTRACT

This review of documents on junior college teacher evaluation is concerned with guidelines and principles for evaluation, criteria for judging instructor effectiveness, selection of suitable evaluators, and the administration of effective methods of evaluation. Three approaches to instructor evaluation are considered: student evaluation by opinionnaire, instructor self-appraisal, and team evaluation involving both instructor and administrator. The third technique, basing evaluation on student attainment of learning objectives, is most directly relevant to the purpose of evaluation, which is to improve instruction. (MS)

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TEACHER EVALUATION: TOWARD IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

Evaluation of the teaching faculty of junior colleges may be undertaken for a number of reasons including (1) assessment for promotions or merit pay increases, (2) administrative curiosity about the quality of instruction, and (3) the improvement of teaching quality. The last is the most frequently cited reason for instructor evaluation, based on the view of junior colleges as "teaching institutions."

Problems confronting those who want to undertake instructor evaluation include establishing guiding principles, designating appropriate criteria for judging instructor effectiveness, selecting suitable evaluators, and administering effective methods of evaluation.

This issue of the *Junior College Research Review* addresses these problems associated with instructor evaluation. Documents included in this review were selected from materials received and processed by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges. Particular emphasis is placed on those documents relating to evaluation for the purpose of improving instruction. All documents cited in the bibliography have been announced in *Research in Education*. They may be obtained from EDRS, as explained on page 4, unless otherwise noted.

Principles

Regardless of who designs the evaluation procedure and regardless of the techniques employed, certain principles should be followed. Morin (ED 024 361) suggests that

1. evaluation is a complex and vital process and must not be treated casually . . . ,
2. the evaluator must employ "scientific" procedures in an effort to collect objective data,
3. evaluation of individual instructors should focus primarily on definable segments of observable behavior—both of the teacher and of the students
4. to determine the desirability of changes in student behavior, some prior descriptions must be prepared in operational terms of the type of performance desired,
5. both instructor and evaluator must be cognizant of, and accept as legitimate, the stated objectives of the instructional procedures, and
6. the evaluative procedure must be inherent in the total scheme for instructional development in the college.

Although some apply to certain evaluation techniques more than to others, these or similar principles should be carefully considered as the first step in any evaluation procedure.

Criteria

There appears to be no consensus regarding the specific criteria for judging effective teaching. Banister (ED 022 450) states that there are three general categories of criteria an evaluator should consider when either constructing or selecting an evaluation instrument:

1. Classroom atmosphere—a "climate" conducive to student ease, where students feel they have the respect of their instructor and classmates, where they are challenged by their work, where they are confident they can succeed, and where they experience gratifying success.
2. Instructor—a person who is tolerant, reasonable, approachable, who possesses mastery of field and understanding interest and enthusiasm for the subject, who is thoroughly prepared for each class, and who conducts each class efficiently without annoyances or mannerisms which divert attention.
3. Course—one which has clearly defined objectives and standards which must be attained, which utilizes methods and material adapted to specific needs of the student but allows for individual differences, in which there is student participation, reviews at regular intervals, fair tests returned promptly, in which the interrelatedness of knowledge and relation to daily life are stressed, and in which students are appraised periodically of the quality of the progress.

Not all of these criteria necessarily apply to all methods of evaluation; the evaluator must select the criteria most appropriate for his particular purposes.

Evaluation by Students

Despite the fact that instructors sometimes deny the reliability and value of student ratings, this method is receiving increased attention. One source (ED 022 450) notes that student evaluations, when carefully and properly handled, provide the best criterion of quality of instruction. Research conducted by Rayder (ED 021 527) demonstrates that student ratings of instructors are not substantially related to the student's sex, age, grade point average, or grade(s) previously received from the instructor being rated. Moreover, students, unlike administrators or even teaching colleagues, have the opportunity to view the instructor in his day-to-day teaching activities and therefore should not be ignored as evaluators.

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The most common method employed in student ratings is the opinionnaire. Several documents provide samples of student rating forms (ED 013 066, ED 014 959, ED 020 720, ED 021 527, ED 022 450, ED 023 405, and ED 028 775). Most require the student simply to rate his instructor on various attributes relevant to teaching ability; several, however, include open-ended questions or invite suggestions and comments.

The possible value of student evaluations is demonstrated in a study conducted at St. Johns River College (ED 013 066). The evaluation form required students to rate their instructors on a scale of one to five, on scholarship, skill of presentation, positive personal traits, and accuracy in evaluating students. Students were invited to supplement their ratings with written comments. A comparison of scores achieved by the full-time teaching faculty for the two years 1964-65 and 1965-66 yielded the following results:

1. Of the full-time instructors rated the first year, 14 did not return in the fall of 1965. Ten of these were in the lower half of the rating, thus reducing the spread of returning faculty by nearly one-third.
2. Fifteen instructors who rated in the lower half did return; all but one of these instructors improved on the next rating.

It was further reported that faculty members who made significant improvement had taken the students' ratings seriously, particularly their written comments.

Instructor Self-Appraisal

An example of self-evaluation is presented by Anderson (ED 013 634). Each instructor rated himself on a 7-point scale for the following attributes: speaking voice; mannerisms or pleonasms; knowledge of subject matter; personal enthusiasm; enthusiasm engendered in students; digressions; handling of questions; and general atmosphere created in the classroom. The instructor then made audio-tapes of two 1-hour class periods. After listening to the tapes, he completed another rating sheet and compared the two ratings. Although no statistically significant differences were found between the "before" and "after" ratings, more than half the faculty appeared sensitive to the information obtained from the tapes. Of the 19 instructors involved, five rated themselves more favorably the second time, six rated themselves less favorably, and eight did not change their ratings. The instructors concluded that the exercise was of value to them. Anderson lists the advantages of this technique as follows:

1. evidencing interest in the teaching process itself by the administration
2. indicating confidence by the administration in the faculty's ability to evaluate themselves as professionals and make self-indicated improvements,
3. giving the faculty a workable and frequently interesting method whereby they may improve themselves,
4. preservation of anonymity by faculty, thus forestalling feelings of "big brother" watching,
5. establishing essentially a self-operating and perpetuating system not calling for a great amount of time,
6. placing of the dean in the position of being called in for aid by a motivated faculty member, rather than being looked upon as an instructor with unwanted advice, and

7. providing specific and concrete examples (preserved on tape) of problems which can be referred to on replay, without having to rely on notes or faulty memory.

This technique, with additional experimentation (preferably using video-tape), could be a valuable tool in producing increasingly better instructors.

Evaluation by Objectives

In their monograph, "Measuring Faculty Performance" (ED 031 222) Cohen and Brawer present a comprehensive treatment of the objectives, techniques, and concomitant problems of faculty evaluation. They contend that, although evaluation is often stated to be for the purpose of improving instruction, the methods seldom relate to instructional practices and even less to the results of instruction. They propose that evaluation would be more meaningful if it were related to instruction as a discipline rather than to the person of the instructor. If the instructor is to be observed as one force in the learning environment, methods other than those now typical must be employed. More important, the effects of the instructional process must be included in the evaluation design. They suggest that student achievement of learning objectives is the main criterion on which studies of faculty and of instructional effect should be based. The use of student gain on short-range objectives as a measure of teacher effectiveness is generally acknowledged as being more valid than the use of such criteria as, for example, the teacher's effort expended or the various perceptions of observers.

One scheme for evaluating instructors by student attainment is proposed by Israel (ED 029 625). This technique is based on the premise that the ends of instruction must be agreed on before evaluation procedures can be established and teacher effectiveness assessed. The essence of this technique is the development of a carefully selected set of objectives for the student to accomplish and an assessment of the skills, attitudes, and uses of knowledge exhibited by the teacher. The objectives should be developed cooperatively by the teacher and the administrator, for a necessary factor is mutual agreement on what would be accepted as evidence of student attainment of the specified objectives. One distinct advantage of this technique is that, in addition to providing a framework for evaluating instruction, it facilitates instruction; when there are clear statements of objectives, learning is more effective and objectives are attained more readily.

Three alternative methods for implementing this technique are provided by the author. The first calls for the instructor and administrator jointly to determine objectives, to establish criteria for judging attainment of these objectives, and subsequently to evaluate how well students achieved the objectives. If the objectives were not met, necessary modifications to the original objectives could be made and the teaching techniques of the instructor could be altered. The second alternative is similar to the first except that it calls for a classroom visitation by the administrator, thus providing more frequent and rapid feedback to the instructor. The third alternative differs from the second in that it calls for pre- and post-tests to be administered to the students for the purpose of measuring the attainment of objectives. One advantage

of the last alternative is that it assures the same type of evaluation for all instructors.

Cohen and Brawer (ED 031 222) note that faculty evaluation may eventually prove effective in promoting the development of instructional specialists. Currently, a junior college instructor must be competent in all aspects of the instructional process. Through instructor specialization, an institution may be staffed by a core of people who collectively, but not necessarily individually, display excellence in all matters relating to teaching. Instructional specialization suggests team teaching, a practice becoming widespread among institutions at all levels of education. Team members who do not function effectively hinder their immediate colleagues, who can apply necessary sanctions to force them to change or to eliminate them from the team. Evaluation then becomes a process by which colleagues influence each other's activities and eventually it becomes an integral part of the instructional development of the college.

Summary

Junior colleges, emphasizing the teaching function, must provide their students with the most effective instructors and teaching methods possible. Therefore instructor evaluation must be an integral part of the overall developmental plan of the college.

Presented in this review are three different approaches to instructor evaluation: student evaluation by opinionnaire, instructor self-appraisal, and team evaluation involving both the instructor and his administrator. While the first two techniques have demonstrated merit as means of improving instruction, the last, based on student attainment of learning objectives, is more directly relevant to the purpose of evaluation. It appears that the benefits to be derived from this approach more than compensate for the time and energy required to implement it.

The ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges welcomes reports of additional studies relating to instruction evaluation techniques.

Marcia Boyer

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